



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Salmonella Cases Reported in Williston Area

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is continuing to investigate a number of salmonella cases in the Williston area, according to State Epidemiologist Kirby Kruger.

Since June 2, 2005, 10 cases of salmonella have been reported to the Department of Health. Of those, four people were hospitalized and one person died.

“As in any food-borne illness investigation, we are looking at the foods people ate in common, as well as other possible connections we can identify,” Kruger said. “Unfortunately, the source of a food-borne illness often is very difficult to determine.”

A food-borne illness investigation consists of interviewing people who are sick, conducting laboratory tests to determine whether the people were infected with the same type of salmonella, and looking at food-handling procedures.

The Department of Health is exploring whether a common link among several of the cases is that they reported purchasing prepared food at the Economart grocery store in Williston. However, others reported limited or no contact with the store or its products. The department is reviewing food handling procedures at Economart and will make any necessary recommendations.

“We are working with health officials to determine if our store is associated with the cases,” said Mike Kraft, owner of Economart grocery store. “As always, we are committed to ensuring that our employees follow proper food handling procedures. Our first concern is the safety of our customers.”

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Symptoms of infection with salmonella include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever, usually within eight to 72 hours after exposure. The illness usually lasts four to seven days, and most people recover without antibiotic treatment. The elderly, infants, and those who have impaired immune systems are at greater risk for severe infections.

Anyone who experiences symptoms of a food-borne infection should contact his or her physician; anyone who experiences bloody diarrhea should contact his or her physician immediately.

“This unfortunate incident is a reminder to all of us about how serious salmonella infection can be,” said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. “Whether at a business or at home, we all need to handle and prepare food properly to prevent transmission of salmonella.”

The Department of Health recommends the following guidelines:

- Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.
- Promptly refrigerate leftover food.
- Do not cross-contaminate your foods. Use separate cutting boards for meats and vegetables.
- Wash cutting boards, utensils and food preparation surfaces thoroughly after contact with raw food products.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before slicing and serving.
- Cook meat to proper internal temperatures.
 - Ground beef to 160 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Whole poultry to 180 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Poultry breasts to 170 degrees Fahrenheit
- Always wash your hands often, especially before preparing food, after handling raw foods, before eating and after using the bathroom.
- If ill, avoid handling or preparing food.

For additional information, contact Kirby Kruger, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378.

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